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Provisional summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 January 2009, at 3 p.m.

Temporary President: Mr. Mérorès ..... (Haiti)
President: Ms. Lucas ..... (Luxembourg)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Temporary President** declared open the organizational session for 2009 of the Economic and Social Council.

Statement by the Temporary President

2. **The Temporary President** said that 2008 had been a remarkable year. The Council had tackled a number of important development issues and had promoted a range of actions to advance the development agenda. With its new functions, especially the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum, the Council had demonstrated its capacity to bring together a wide range of players to focus on the most critical dimensions of development.

3. The 2008 annual ministerial review had focused on sustainable development and had addressed the most serious challenges to achieving that goal, such as climate change, financial turmoil, rising food and oil prices, and loss of biodiversity. The Council had adopted a ministerial declaration that underscored the need for urgent action by all countries to address those challenges.

4. The national voluntary presentations that had taken place during the review had proved an effective mechanism for strengthening accountability on development commitments and for monitoring results. For the first time, both developed and developing countries had participated in those presentations. The large number of countries volunteering to make presentations for 2009 and 2010 was further proof of the success of the mechanism and of Member States' interest in strengthening the accountability role of the Council.

5. The first Development Cooperation Forum had been held in 2008, with a large number of high-level participants. The Forum had made significant strides in positioning the Council as the principal forum for global policy review and dialogue on the coherence and effectiveness of international development cooperation. Its outcome had provided a strategic input for the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development and the Accra high-level forum on aid effectiveness. A key political message was the need to build a broader consensus around the aid effectiveness agenda.

6. The impact and visibility of the high-level segment had been further enhanced by a series of side events which had served to promote and catalyse multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementing the United Nations development agenda.

7. The Council had also made significant strides in addressing and responding effectively to emerging humanitarian crises, with a special meeting held in May on the global food crisis and the thematic discussion on rural development during the high-level segment. In particular, the Council had drawn attention to the need to promote rural and agricultural development as a way to prevent future food crises and achieve food security.

8. The Council had also played an important role in peacebuilding and post-conflict development and its role in that area should be strengthened by increasing engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. Both the annual ministerial review and Development Cooperation Forum had a role to play in addressing the challenges affecting countries emerging from conflict.

9. In 2008, the Council had further enhanced its profile as a multi-stakeholder mechanism for advancing the development agenda and addressing threats to development prospects. One example was the Council's special event in February on the potential contribution of philanthropy to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Council should capitalize on that progress and on the significant engagement of policymakers to address important challenges to the work of the Council system.

10. One of those challenges was ensuring Member States' continued engagement in the work of the Council at the highest political level. The presence of policymakers was essential to ensure the Council's ability to promote accountability among all actors for the implementation of the development agenda.

11. Another important challenge was to ensure follow-up to the Council's work. There seemed to be a gap between the guidance from the Council and the work of subsidiary bodies and entities within the United Nations system, especially at the country level. More should be done to ensure that the normative work of the Council translated into policies, programmes and operations.

12. Finally, the convening power of the Council should be used to promote a greater engagement of Member States to ensure that the outcome of the Council's global review of the status of implementation of development goals was followed up and implemented at the regional and national levels.

Election of the President

13. **The Temporary President** said that, under rule 18 of the Council's rules of procedure, in 2009 it was the turn of the Group of Western European and other States to nominate a candidate for the President. Consequently, he would take it that the Council wished to elect Ms. Sylvie Lucas (Luxembourg), who had been nominated by the Group, to the post of President.

14. *Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) was elected President by acclamation.*

15. *Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) took the Chair.*

Statement by the President

16. **The President** said that her Government attached particular importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council. As a founding member of the Organization, her country endeavoured to contribute to promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter, showing solidarity and commitment to the causes of development, peace, security and human rights. Luxembourg's cooperation policy was geared towards poverty eradication, particularly in the least developed countries. Its efforts were consistent with the goal of sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental aspects. In the current economic and financial crisis, her country was committed to pursuing its efforts in terms of official development assistance and contributing to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Luxembourg's presidency of the Council would be guided by that same spirit of sustained engagement.

17. In 2009, the Council should capitalize on the progress made in relation to the new functions it had received as a result of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Member States should promote a stronger, more assertive and action-oriented Council.

18. The main challenge would be further strengthening of the Council's work on development. In 2009, the annual ministerial review would focus on implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health, which provided an opportunity to place the spotlight on health-related MDGs. The Council could focus on the interlinkages between health-related goals and the overall development agenda and highlight those dimensions that were critical for effective policies.

19. The Council should strive to bring together development actors who could contribute to the objectives of the 2009 review and advance the realization of the health agenda. The first of a series of events in preparation for the 2009 substantive session would be a special event on philanthropy and global public health, to be held in February. The Council should help to expand the range of partners cooperating with the United Nations, and facilitate the global growth and flow of philanthropic resources. The meeting should aim at mobilizing interest and support for philanthropy worldwide.

20. Events were also planned in preparation for the 2009 annual ministerial review, which would assess progress in reaching development goals and identify best practices in solving development challenges. The review would focus on cross-cutting issues in public health in relation to economic and social development in general and the achievement of the MDGs in particular. There would be a global preparatory meeting for the 2009 review as well as regional meetings on such issues as mainstreaming traditional medicine in sustainable development, financing strategies for health care, e-Health and access to health services.

21. Ten countries had volunteered to make national presentations during the 2009 review. The challenge for the Council was to capitalize on the momentum to consolidate that mechanism and strengthen the accountability role of the Council.

22. Many more initiatives, including some from civil society, were in preparation. Initiatives for the health sector included the Secretary-General's health initiative.

23. At the recent Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, one of the requests addressed to the Council had been to consider the need for a strengthened and more effective intergovernmental process to carry out financing for development follow-up at its spring meeting and its 2009 substantive session with a view to making

recommendations for action by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. She intended to start consultations as soon as possible with all stakeholders of the Monterrey process.

24. At that Conference, Member States had also decided to hold a conference on the world financial crisis and its impact on development, to be organized by the President of the General Assembly. The spring meeting seemed to be the right forum to discuss how the Council could make a useful contribution to the ongoing debate and in particular to the systemic issues referred to in paragraph 78 of the Doha Declaration on financing for Development.

25. Another important priority was to continue to strengthen the Development Cooperation Forum. In 2008, the first Forum had helped to establish the role of the Council as a convener of multi-stakeholder consultations on key development issues.

26. The challenge for the next meeting of the Forum would be to establish itself as the main forum for strengthening mutual accountability in development cooperation. Efforts should also be made to enhance cooperation with other relevant institutions, such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

27. In the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, Member States had recognized that microfinance was effective in generating self-employment, which could contribute to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The Council should seek to strengthen its action in that area.

28. The Council should also continue to strengthen its role and capacity to respond to emerging issues and crises, which in recent years had included the food and energy crises and the impending risks of climate change. The challenge was to continue to maintain focus on those important issues.

29. In view of the Council's unique expertise and experience in dealing with the development challenges of countries emerging from conflict, it should also strengthen its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission. She looked forward to discussing possible avenues for closer cooperation.

30. Member States were in the middle of a deep financial and economic crisis, which was affecting the whole world and risked setting back the clock for development. The Council should offer a venue to address the crisis's multiple dimensions and implications for poverty and sustainable development and solicit concrete initiatives to help alleviate its impact on the most vulnerable.

Statement by the Deputy Secretary-General

31. **The Deputy Secretary-General** expressed her congratulations to the incoming President on her assumption of the presidency and joined her in thanking the outgoing President for his excellent work. On taking office, the outgoing President had been confident that 2008 would be another landmark year for the Economic and Social Council. In effect, under his leadership and with the support of its members, the Council had taken important steps forward with regard to the biennial Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial review. The Council had also engaged very actively with a range of global partners who shared its concern for economic and social development. She was confident that the new President would guide the Council with equal success.

32. In the face of multiple global crises, the Council's work would be especially challenging in the coming months. The effects of the recent financial turmoil continued to reverberate around the world. Years of painstaking effort hung in the balance. Unemployment was rising, food and energy prices fluctuating, social protection systems failing and access to credit and financial services shrinking. It was all taking a heavy toll on individuals, especially the poorest of the poor.

33. The latest United Nations forecast predicted that world per capita income would fall during the year. Developed countries were leading the downturn, but developing countries were also being dragged down. Growth rates in many African States would not keep up with increases in population. Some Latin American economies could grind to a standstill. Even countries with fast-growing economies in Asia could suffer serious setbacks. Moreover, the food crisis was still an issue. Even though prices had dropped recently, they were still higher than in 2006 and countries still faced structural supply problems. So, despite recent progress at the midpoint towards the 2015 target date for the Millennium Development Goals, more people were suffering from poverty and hunger. The hard-won progress was an investment in the future and must be protected. Efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals should be redoubled. Initiatives for

agricultural development should be stepped up to promote greater food security. Action was also needed on energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy, which were critical for addressing climate change. There were just 11 months until the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, where negotiators must work to reach an agreement on an international response to climate change that rose to the challenge and which all countries could support.

34. The international community must keep its promises to the world's poor. She had been encouraged by the commitments made at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to increase official development assistance in a bid to fulfil the long-standing targets, despite the challenges of the financial crisis. Of course, all States must now meet their commitments. Substantial progress was needed with regard to the implementation of both the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development.

35. The Council was in a unique position to forge closer ties among all relevant parties, so as to maximize the potential of the United Nations to serve the needs of humanity. The Development Cooperation Forum could work towards more effective approaches and greater coherence in the areas of aid, trade, investment and resource flows. The annual ministerial review offered an opportunity to exchange ideas and evaluate progress. The Council should make the most of the 2009 review, which would focus on the critical issue of public health.

36. She was encouraged by the interaction between the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission in helping countries recovering from conflict and in promoting an integrated approach to poverty eradication, sustainable development and human rights. The Council had also played a constructive role in emergency situations. During the 2008 food crisis, the Council's emergency sessions had helped mobilize the international community.

37. The Council had much work to do. She and the Secretary-General looked forward to working with the Council over the coming year.

Election of the Bureau

38. **The President** said that rule 18 of its rules of procedure provided for the Council to elect four Vice-Presidents. She took it that the Council wished to elect the candidates nominated by each regional group.

39. *Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia) and Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) were elected Vice-Presidents of the Council for 2009 by acclamation.*

40. **Mr. Palouš** (Observer for the Czech Republic), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Council had taken significant steps in the past year. He expressed gratitude to the outgoing Bureau, which had successfully implemented the new functions of the Council, with the convening of the first Development Cooperation Forum, and had organized the Special Meeting on the Global Food Crisis in a timely fashion.

41. The European Union recognized and fully supported the need to further pursue the reform of the main bodies of the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council, in order to improve the representativeness, transparency and effectiveness of the system. The European Union was committed to the important work of the Council.

42. **Mr. Blake** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed his gratitude to the outgoing Bureau, for their efforts to revitalize the Council in 2008. The Group of 77 and China had always placed emphasis on development, as being critical to all efforts to address the critical challenges facing humanity. That required an empowered Economic and Social Council, one with the capacity and confidence to deliver its Charter functions. Indeed, that had been re-emphasized several times, including in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and General Assembly resolution 61/16.

43. The increased pressure on development posed by the multiple crises of 2008 had reaffirmed the importance of a revitalized and strengthened Council. In that regard, the Group of 77 and China welcomed implementation of the 2005 decisions to strengthen the Council. The initiatives taken during 2008 demonstrating a new and proactive approach to its functioning were equally as important. Against that backdrop of change, the Council was likely to face even greater challenges in 2009.

44. **Mr. Sumi** (Japan) extended his gratitude to the outgoing President of the Council for his leadership and his confidence in the leadership and ability of the new President.

45. The 2009 session would be particularly important for the Council, as the financial crisis was jeopardizing the livelihoods of vulnerable people around the world. Important follow-up to the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development would be implemented by the Council in the coming year. In particular, the theme of the 2009 annual ministerial review, implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health, was very important, and Japan had announced its intention to make a national voluntary presentation in order to share its unique experience of enhancing its own public health as well as its role as a strong advocate for the promotion of global health and human security in general.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/2009/1 and E/2009/2 and Corr.1)

46. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the provisional agenda for its 2009 organizational session (E/2009/2 and Corr.1).

47. *The provisional agenda was adopted.*

48. **The President** recalled that in its resolutions 1988/77 and 1989/114, and in its decision 2006/206, the Council had decided to adopt certain measures to revitalize and improve its functioning. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 45/264, 48/162, 50/227, 52/12 B, 57/270 B and 61/16, had also taken important steps to restructure and revitalize the Council. On the basis of those guidelines, the Council would have before it for consideration at its organizational session the annotated provisional agenda (E/2009/2 and Corr.1) and the proposed basic programme of work for the Council for 2009 and 2010 (E/2009/1).

49. In conformity with the provisions of paragraph 2 (l) of Council resolution 1988/77, informal consultations would be held on the proposed basic programme of work and on the other matters requiring action by the Council at the organizational session.

50. Turning to the question of seating arrangements for delegations, she proposed that, as in the past, lots should be drawn to determine which delegation would occupy the first seat.

51. *The delegation of Liechtenstein was selected by the drawing of lots to take the first seat.*

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.